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LETTER DATED 11 FEBRUARY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF KUWAIT TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of the press communiqué adopted by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its nineteenth special session, held in Kuwait on 11 February 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad A. ABULHASAN
Permanent Representative

Annex

Press communiqué adopted by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its nineteenth special session, held in Kuwait on 11 February 1998

The Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its nineteenth special session on 11 February 1998 in Kuwait under the chairmanship of His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait. The meeting was attended by His Excellency Mr. Rashid Bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman and His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar. His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim al-Hegelan, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, also participated in the meeting.

The Ministerial Council is aware of the dangerous and delicate situation in the region resulting from the crisis that Iraq created with the inspectors of the United Nations Special Commission entrusted with the destruction of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction when it refused to cooperate with them and prevented them from performing their tasks by imposing conditions and creating obstacles in violation of the resolutions of the Security Council relating to its aggression against Kuwait. The Council therefore studied these developments and the real dangers that they bring with them and that threaten the security and stability of the region.

Noting the consensus of the international community and its insistence on Iraq's full compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Council holds the Iraqi regime responsible for the procrastination and delay in their implementation that has caused the sanctions imposed on it to be maintained. The fraternal Iraqi people are suffering the effects of those sanctions, and the GCC States share their suffering and regard the Iraqi regime as being solely responsible for it.

The Council stresses that the current crisis is the making of the Iraqi regime alone and that it is a result of that regime's failure to cooperate with the United Nations inspectors and of its defiance of the will of the international community. This exposes Iraq to grave dangers. The Council expresses its absolute conviction that the responsibility for the outcome of this crisis will fall solely on the Iraqi regime.

The Council further stresses that it is neither reasonable nor acceptable for the Iraqi regime to take unilateral measures that aggravate the situation and that may have dire consequences while holding the Arab nation and the international community responsible for those consequences.

The Council has unstintingly supported every offer of good offices and has backed every peaceful initiative. Accordingly, full responsibility for the disastrous consequences of what might happen is to be borne by the Iraqi regime alone.

The Council notes that, despite the many efforts made by numerous inter-Arab and international parties to persuade Iraq to relinquish the position it has taken and to permit the inspectors to carry out their tasks without restrictions or conditions, the Iraqi regime has nevertheless persisted in its intransigence without heed for the dangers that might ensue from such a stance.

Given this strained atmosphere, which presages imminent danger, the Council expresses the belief that the only way to spare the Iraqi people the hazards and the suffering to which it is being exposed is for the Iraqi regime to comply with the resolutions the international community has unanimously agreed must be implemented and which have been accepted by Iraq in accordance with the Special Commission's programme. No one disputes that they must be implemented.

In an endeavour to prevent the fraternal Iraqi people from suffering the grave consequences of this crisis, the Council calls upon the Iraqi regime to respond positively to the efforts being made to secure its compliance with all of its obligations by lifting the restrictions it has imposed on the activities of the inspectors as a preparatory step towards the mitigation of the sanctions and the alleviation of the suffering of the fraternal Iraqi people.

The Council reaffirms its established position that it is essential to preserve the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

The Council has decided to pursue contacts among member States in order to monitor developments and that its current session will remain open for that purpose.